

# GREAT BEAR – NC500

28<sup>th</sup> April – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2024

The 7 day price is £530 per person

## **WHAT THE PRICE INCLUDES**

- \* Transport for bikes and bags up to Inverness and back
- \* 8 nights' accommodation in twin rooms or dorm room in hostels and one night in a twin room in a hotel. Upgrade to B&B available for £300 more pp
- \* Baggage transfers for the duration of the trip
- \* Refreshments, tea, coffee etc
- \* Vehicular support for the entire cycle including back up vehicle carrying spares, mechanical support and use of spare bike should you need it
- \* Overnight bike storage

## **WHAT THE PRICE EXCLUDES**

- \* Bike and helmet hire
- \* Personal clothing and equipment
- \* Insurance
- \* Breakfast, Lunches and evening meals

## **DAILY**

**28<sup>th</sup>** - Arrive in Inverness

**29<sup>th</sup>** - Day 1 – Inverness to Applecross – 84 miles

**30<sup>th</sup>** - Day 2 – Applecross to Gairloch – 63 miles

**1<sup>st</sup>** - Day 3 – Gairloch to Ullapool – 58 miles

**2<sup>nd</sup>** - Day 4 – Ullapool to Durness – 67 miles

**3<sup>rd</sup>** - Day 5 – Durness to Thurso – 71 miles

**4<sup>th</sup>** - Day 6 – Thurso to Helmsdale – 72 miles

**5<sup>th</sup>** - Day 7 – Helmsdale to Inverness – 76 miles

6<sup>th</sup> - Travel home

\*Daily mileages can sometimes vary due to road closures, route deviations etc

### **TRANSPORT**

Bikes can be dropped off with me before the ride in Bedfordshire and then I will be collecting bikes on the way north from convenient stops along the M6. I know some of you are driving up with your bikes but I will be in touch before the trip to see what you all need. Same on the way home after the ride. You will need to make your own way to Inverness.

### **WHAT HAPPENS DAY TO DAY?**

I have Garmin edge cycle computers for navigation which have the daily routes planned into them. We have a Garmin for every 2 riders if you wish to use one. For those of you with your own Garmin's I will send out the routes prior to the ride. If you want to go on a different route entirely then it is up to you providing that you turn up at the same accommodation as us! Please be advised that support in case of a severe breakdown off of the main route may be limited.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

The accommodation provided on the trip is hostels and 1 hotel to keep the costs down; there is an option to upgrade to the standard B&B option for £300 extra. Most nights have the option to cater for yourself and on most nights there are options to eat out.

### **BIKES AND EQUIPMENT**

We strongly recommend that you ride a road or touring bike for the cycle and have put in sufficient training on this same bike. Whatever you choose make sure the bike has a suitable range of gears as you will be climbing steep hills in places and if you are not familiar with the mechanics of your bike it would pay to take it to a cycle shop for a service prior to the trip. If you intend on completing the ride on anything other than a road bike then please let me know prior to the ride as the vehicles are set up to carry road bikes.

One bike only please. If completing the ride on a touring bike please do not turn up for collection with panniers fitted as your bike won't fit in the van/trailer, you may also end up leaving them in the van halfway through day one. Also please consider if you really need that bar bag on your road bike, I would guess that 90% of people who turn up with one end up leaving it in the van for the entire trip after day one.

If you don't already own a pair prior to the ride you may want to get hold of some waterproof overshoes. These are often overlooked when planning the trip as most riders don't choose to go out in the rain but in completing the NC500 it is inevitable that you will have to set out in the rain at some point.

Lights, you may think well 'I won't be riding at night', but in heavy rain, fog and under tree cover you need to give that vehicle approaching you from behind at 60mph every chance they can to see you. Some people turn up with lights that can barely be seen halfway down a lay-by and I would only recommend a high output LED pulsating rear light as there is a good chance you will have dense sea fog on at certain points on the coast road. Knog, Moon, Lezyne and Exposure all make good powerful rear lights.

Same goes for clothing, that all black Castelli gear looks great but when you have a logging truck bearing down on you in the rain in Scotland you want to make sure he knows you are there.

Gloves - you can never have too many pairs.

Water bottles – If you have 1 x 500ml bottle then you may want to invest in a couple of nice big bottles.

It is recommended that you bring a range of spares for your bike (chain links, spokes, inner tubes) I have a certain amount for sale on board the support vehicle, please understand however that it is not possible to stock for every single bicycle. I have tyres, tubes, bar tape, cleats, brake pads, gear and brake cables, chains, chamois cream and more.

You are responsible for your own routine maintenance throughout the trip but I will help out in any way that I can. I have track pumps and you do not need to bring your own.

### **BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE**

Your baggage allowance for this trip is just the one piece of main luggage in the form of a sports/expedition bag or suitcase (not 4 small bags). If you have anything with wheels this will be preferred. Please also bring a small rucksack for you to keep all of your items in that you may need during the day (sun cream, tablets, chamois cream etc)

### **PREPARATION**

Treat yourself to some new gear cables, or while the bike is in for a service ask your bike shop to do this, after punctures a snapped gear cable is the most common breakdown on these trips, they can be brought for as little as £2 each and replacing them pre ride can save you a whole world of hassle!

**Bring a replacement derailleur hanger** – if your bike falls over, or you crash or someone runs into the back of you there is a high chance this will break as it is designed to do – if this happens and you don't have a replacement then it's the spare bike for the rest of the trip for you.

**Same with spokes** – Bring a couple of spares to see you through when you break one, and then another, and another....

Bottom brackets – a good day in the wet will bring out all of the gremlins so pop a new one in now instead of scratting around trying to find one in Scotland – because you wont find one on the NC.

**You may not have experienced any of the scenarios above but believe me I have, quite often.**

### **SUPPORT**

The support vehicle will always be on hand should you need assistance at any time during the trip. In the van is a full tool kit, spare wheels and spare bikes. I will always be close to the riding group and will get ahead of you now and again for you to fill up water bottles and have a sit down. Whether you need a break, have bike trouble or just need emotional support getting up a big hill, I will do what I can to keep you going.

### **FOOD**

Breakfast lunches and dinner are not included on the base version of this particular trip to keep the cost down – we are in hostels so catering for yourself has never been easier -feel free to leave any food you require in the van. Due to the remoteness of certain parts of this trip I would advise that we leave Inverness with back up supplies to fuel your days.

Evening meals and drinks are not included in the price, you can cater for yourself or I will give you eating out options prior to the trip.

### **LAUNDRY**

Due to staying in hostels there is almost always an option to wash and dry your clothing at the accommodation – you wouldn't want to do this every night though so bring a decent amount of kit to minimise your laundry time.

Any further queries or questions please contact me on – Carl – 07860 563810 or 07869 714319